



Stepfamily Blending 101

In an era where over 50% of families in the U.S. are remarried or re-coupled and 1,300 new stepfamilies are forming each day, it's important to consider the impact of stepfamily blending on weddings. The days of the traditional father of the bride walking the bride down the aisle with the mother and father of the bride giving her away are slipping away. The question of how to involve both biological and stepparents in the wedding has been raised more than once. I have felt the discomfort of things getting sour at a time when it should be a wondrous time of life for a young couple, having married off my stepson last year.

For some, involving the stepparents is not a difficult task because everyone gets along or are civil to one another. However, for those that need to tiptoe, here are some tips:

1. Send out invitations in the name of the bride and groom only.
2. Have separate bridal showers for the mother and stepmother to attend or host (more showers also means more gifts!).
3. Limit rehearsal and rehearsal dinner participation to the bridal party and only the parents involved in the ceremony.
4. Allow both dads to walk their little girl down the aisle, one on each side of her assuming they both have a close relationship to the bride.
5. Sit all four in the row designated for parents during the ceremony to avoid hurt feelings.
6. Keep pictures with biological parents separate. Have some with the father and stepmother, then a separate set with the mother and stepfather.
7. Omit the receiving line or limit to just the wedding party if there must be a receiving line.
8. Seat parents and their spouses at separate tables amongst their friends during the reception to provide some distance and emotional support.
9. Skip any big announcements regarding whose parents are who at the reception.
10. Let the toasters, usually the best man and maid of honor, know parents shouldn't be mentioned.
11. Limit the amount of alcohol during the reception to help keep everyone under control.
12. Keep the length of the ceremony and reception reasonable so there is less time for anything to happen.

Beyond these tips, communication is essential. Sit down with both sets of parents and share concerns and wish for their participation in the big day.

Stoneleigh Event Consultant Meredith Thomas is available for additional planning services on a fee basis. Meredith has many years of experience planning special events and will work with you to create the wedding of your dreams. Contact Meredith at mthomas@stoneleighgolf.com to learn more.